



## PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Larry R. Price  
Chief Probation Officer

June 30, 2002

The Honorable Gary D. Hoff, Presiding Judge, Fresno County Superior Court  
The Honorable M. Bruce Smith, Presiding Judge, Fresno County Juvenile Delinquency Court  
Supervisor Bob Waterston, Chair, Fresno County Board of Supervisors  
Bart Bohn, County Administrative Officer, County Administrative Office  
Benjamin Quintana, Chair, Juvenile Justice Commission

We are pleased to submit the Fresno County Probation Department's Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2001/2002.

This past year may best be described as a roller coaster ride on a scale of "Colossus." The year started off with projections of major budget cuts and ended with budget reduction proposals of 53 (\*) positions in the Probation Department. A policy decision was made early in the year not to reduce bed capacity at the Juvenile Hall or the Elkhorn Correctional Facility but to reduce the department's services in Adult and Juvenile Probation. Unfortunately, this was also a year when many grants ended their funding cycle and County money was not available to replace some very valued services. At the same time we moved forward in a very positive atmosphere of planning for the construction of the new Juvenile Justice Campus and were successful in consolidating all of our Group Counselors and Custodial Care Officers to a single classification of Juvenile Correctional Officers.

The year was met with many new challenges and things that we have not faced in recent years such as members of our staff going off to war. It was also a time to reflect on the value of probation as it fits into the continuum of the Criminal Justice System. Officers in our department went to work to "prove our worth." *The Fresno Bee* took up the gauntlet by writing an editorial in favor of the importance of Probation to the system. In a television news interview a reporter asked the Chief Probation Officer, "Losing 41 Deputy Probation Officers does not have the kind of impact on public safety as losing 41 Police Officers or Deputy Sheriffs, does it?" I seized the opportunity to explain to the reporter the meaning of the word 'system' as it pertains to Criminal Justice System; how all parts are interconnected and each relies on the other to do the job in the continuum of the 'system.' I think the point that may have gotten us the best mileage was when I said something like, "Why do you see the basic role of a public safety officer differently between a Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer, and a Deputy Probation Officer? We are all peace officers within the legal definitions of Sections 830 of the California Penal Code. Deputy Probation Officers work every day on the streets with the same felons as a Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer. Our Deputy Probation Officers are armed, they drive marked cars, they make arrests, and they provide for the public safety." Case closed! Then I went on to talk about the other important things we do in Probation like prevention, intervention, community based corrections models, services to victims, restorative justice, and incarceration with treatment components.

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Highlights of the year are reflected throughout the Annual Report. We continue to make ourselves proud with state and national recognition of our commitment to primary prevention services to at-risk children. This year we presented our models at state and national conferences. The Juvenile Automation System (JAS) continued to gain national attention. *The Fresno Bee* was the recipient of a national award from the American Probation and Parole Association for 'public awareness through the media' for their article titled "Hall of Shame" written about our need for a state-of-the-art Juvenile Hall in Fresno County. Our partnerships continue to develop with collaborating agencies throughout the County, including Criminal Justice, Social Services, Mental Health Services, and community based organizations.

When Fiscal Year 2001/2002 ended, full time positions in the department topped its highest level of 573 permanent employees. The Department's annual budget approached the \$50 million dollar mark. A reduced adopted budget for 2002/2003 will bring with it many challenges. There may never, again, be a year like this one when federal, state, and county monies all came to points of reduction at the same time. It is painful as the Chief Probation Officer of this department to have worked with such a dedicated group of people for seven years in building new public safety service levels and now to have to dismantle so many of the things we worked so hard to create. We continue each year to identify the number of positions we know we really need to run this department. In this year's budget submittal we identified 204 new positions that we need in juvenile and adult probation to do our job right in the arena of public safety. I am extremely distressed about our inability to provide funding for adult felony supervision in this county. Because that part of the department relies on general County funded revenues, we have not been able to properly staff or provide proper offices. With approximately 9,000 adult felons on probation in Fresno County, we need to be on the streets, day and night, supervising those people, but with our limited resources we will barely be able to keep track of them on paper. I strongly recommend that this be a continuing top priority for funding. Our greatest challenge continues to be managing the population of the 285 bed Juvenile Hall while waiting for a new and larger facility to be built. I commend the men and women who staff the Fresno County Probation Department for their loyalty and commitment to this agency in getting the job done. Outside of the inner circle, few know what it takes to make a 24/7 public safety agency tick. To all in our department personnel ranks who work out in the trenches every day, "Keep up the good fight."



Chief Probation Officer

\* At close of budget hearings in July, actual staff reductions from the previous year were 27 with the loss of federal, state, and county funding.

Special thanks to Judy Talent, Shelly Riddle, Kim Jones, and Dolly Quan for the excellence of this Annual Report.